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ABSTRACT

A Brazilian librarian with international experience reviews a cross-section of the literature on libraries and librarianship in developing countries as reported by observers from developed countries, deploring tendencies to make comparisons which imply value judgements, use models which reflect the experience of industrialized societies, display cultural biases, and extrapolate limited personal experience in one country or a limited area to the whole Third World. Varying factors discussed include definitions of developing and underdevelopment used to identify "developing countries," theories put forward to explain the causes of underdevelopment, and nonrecognition of cultural heritages not based on literacy. Unvarying variables examined via the literature are book publishing and reading, the educational system and the use of books, nonselection and quasi-acquisition of materials, cataloging and classification problems, books for use versus books for posterity, library cooperation, and the outlook for the development of public libraries. It is concluded that the final responsibility for coming to terms with user's needs withing the limitations, constraints, and potentialities of their respective societies rests on librarians from the developing world. (RAA)

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# A Portrait of Librarianship in Developing Societies

by

Antonio A. Briquet de Lemos

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*Editor's Note*

This essay represents something of a departure from the established practice of this series, in that its style and message are conspicuously polemical. No change in practice for *Occasional Papers* is envisioned; rather, an exception was made in recognition of what would appear to be a particularly timely and important viewpoint, in need of presentation on the basis of indigenous experience. The text being controversial, we will particularly welcome reactions from readers—evaluative statements pro or con, or brief commentaries on particular points—such as might themselves be collected as an *Occasional Paper* in its own right. Customary editorial review would apply; statements should be directed to the office before 1 March 1982.

—D.W. Krummel
*Editor*

# INTRODUCTION

Much information about library and information services in the developing world has been produced by expatriates and foreign advisers reporting their impressions. Some have gone with the idea—either proclaimed or disguised—of reporting the idiosyncrasies of alien people and institutions to enlighten those who believe that the earth has not edges and ends a few kilometers away. Brewster's bibliography has over 40 pages of published and nonpublished materials of interest for the exclusive study of U.S. library activities overseas.[1]

Most literature on international librarianship adopts a descriptive or critical approach with a particular country. Among these works, some documents tend to infer from personal experiences a comprehensive pattern of libraries and librarianship in developing countries. This attempt to unify a variety of countries under an all-embracing denomination has spawned studies on how different institutions and disciplines look under the circumstances prevailing in this sort of dialectic antithesis to the developed world; hence, studies about medicine, education, etc. *in* developing countries. Needless to say, a work carrying a generic title often covers only a few countries.

Not all works published about librarianship in developing countries are irrelevant; rather, their contribution to a better understanding of the role of libraries in developing societies has not yet been assessed, nor has identification of the causes and factors influencing overall library development to follow routes different from those tracked by the developed countries been identified. On the other hand, one wonders how much these works have stimulated self-criticism and inquiry on the part of librarians in developing countries. (Another possibility is that they have become barren platitudes deserving no attention at all.)

This study surveys general statements and opinions about libraries and librarianship in developing countries as enunciated by observers from developed countries. Since issues and features in a particular country are not stressed, the main concern will be generalized appraisals and judgments regarding the socioeconomic category "developing countries," either from a descriptive/critical angle or oriented by a prescriptive or normative intent. Particular studies about a given country may be considered as far as they include generalized propositions or make points overlooked in other studies. This study is not historical, nor does it attempt to be an exhaustive survey of the literature; rather, it concerns a cross section of this literature. Efforts have been made to cover the most representative

contributions whose main observations will be summarized from the standpoint of an autochthon of a developing country. The terms *libraries* and *librarianship* will be used here to include the concepts of "information services" and "documentation," unless otherwise stated.

## DEVELOPING OR UNDERDEVELOPING?

### What's in a Name?

The first obstacle to writing about developing countries, hardly a major one, is the need to confront the varied nomenclature used to designate those regions of the world where almost two-thirds of its population live. Cohen and others suggested that the shifting vocabulary used to denote these countries may reveal how they were perceived from outside.[2] In their opinion this was partially solved by official decree when the international organizations presented their authorized version and the expression "developing societies" "came to give more optimistic reverberations to U.N. reports." The battle of words is especially interesting when contrasted with the wide acceptance of the expression "developed country." The term *underdevelopment* was considered susceptible to raise "unfavourable" or "invidious connotations."[3] Some authors more concerned with technological progress tended to classify societies as preindustrial, industrial and postindustrial, corresponding to countries where most of the active population is employed and the greater part of the gross national product is derived from, the primary (agriculture and mining), secondary (manufacturing and processing) or tertiary (services) sectors.

Lerner emphasized the process of modernization in societies which were designated from this standpoint as traditional, transitional and modern.[4] The vogue of such nomenclature was associated with the growing importance of structural functionalist approaches in the study of developing societies. Similarly, Riggs illustrates with a metaphor the different societal structures: passage of light through a prism gave him the ideas of fused, diffracted and prismatic (or "developing") societies. These are "prismatic" because they present elements of both the fused (relatively undifferentiated, primitive) societies and diffracted (developed) societies.[5] Riggs's noting of the simultaneous existence in the prismatic society of features of both less and more complex forms of societal organization is in some way comparable to the so-called dualism of economic structures prevailing in developing societies, as will be seen later.

Other terms have been used throughout the years, e.g., backward countries, overseas countries, less-developed countries, newly-developing countries. "Emergent," "Third World," and "nonaligned" countries have come into being with stronger political connotations than usually emphasized by leaders of the newly independent countries particularly after the 1955 Bandung conference. Further complication has been added to the battle of words by the extensive use of the term *Western* to indicate all the industrialized countries (as if some countries located in the same region were not underdeveloped). The implications are clear, especially the identification of "civilized" with "Western."

For present purposes, the reasonably unambiguous terms *developed* and *developing* countries or societies will be preferred, although they, too, are not exempt from criticism. "Developing country" is used here to designate a "poor or primitive country that is developing better economic and social conditions."

**Which are the Developing Countries?**

Having settled on terms, efforts should be made to define the conditions common to all these countries. Hodder took into account the concept of underdevelopment as a condition, although it could be argued that it is a process: "By *underdevelopment* is meant that condition, characteristic of developing countries, in which levels and growth rates of real income and capital per head of population are low by comparison with Western Europe, North America and Australia."[4] Definitions like this, according to Bernstein, do not consider underdeveloping as a possibility, that which "precludes any understanding of underdevelopment as a process, as a phenomenon which has itself emerged historically."[5]

Finsterbusch defined national development as "the increase in a nation's ability to control and process its resources and environment by means of improved technology and organization." Hodder was aware of the limitations of his definition regarding the qualitative aspects of life, and Finsterbusch added an important caveat by calling attention to the biases, assumptions and omissions of his definition of national development: "We overlook the distribution of environmental control within societies, which often varies considerably from region to region and from group to group. Our definition has a western bias since we do not give the eastern concern for self control the same importance as we give the western concern for controlling the environment."[6] Knowledge and organization are the two key factors in development.

When definition is difficult, the subjects of study can be examined for their common characteristics or universals. Stavenhagen pointed out that developing "nations, generally grouped together for descriptive purposes, are frequently as different from each other as they are from any one developed country" and that we must "abstract from their diversity and concentrate our attention on those aspects which they do, indeed, have in common."[9] Several authors have attempted to identify the common characteristics shared by developing countries in the world or in a given region like the Middle East or Latin America. Hodder has pinpointed such characteristics:

1. low life expectancy at birth;
2. high infant mortality rates;
3. poor health conditions of the population;
4. widespread illiteracy;
5. low per capita output, together with poverty and indebtedness;
6. subsistence production generally important;
7. economies nondiversified and geared to the primary sector;
8. little manufacturing industry;
9. no large-scale application of scientific and technological methods to agriculture of industry; and
10. narrowness of markets.

Dean has also presented a list of common characteristics generally like Hodder's. He points out, however, the dependence of developing countries on expatriate manpower, a one-crop economy, a high unemployment rate, poor internal communications, and a tropical or semitropical ambience.[10]

To show how some authors tend to extrapolate a particular case to the whole range of developing countries, we may compare Dean's one-crop economy feature with facts available. According to an International Monetary Fund study of the leading export commodities of 37 developing countries in one year (1966 or 1967), each of the countries studied exported an average of three products, and there were very few one-crop economies: Bolivia (tin, 63%), Iran (oil, 91%), Iraq (oil, 92%), Libya (oil, 99%), and Mauritania (iron ore, 91%). In proposing a program of library development for Commonwealth countries, Gunton designated as "intrinsic difficulties" features considered here as "common characteristics." These difficulties are shared by the tropics, and this is in itself a sort of geographical fatalism. Gunton's points, not envisaged by the authors cited earlier, are: considerable distances, multilingual populations, widespread unawareness of mistaken idea of the role of libraries, tradition of oral

communication, subordinate position of women which inhibits informal education in the home, unhealthy climate, absence (outside tribal connections) of efforts at group improvement, authority (often autocratic), apathy toward improvement or mass education.[11]

We can compare features mentioned as typical of developing countries with Hoogvelt's so-called indicators of social, political and cultural development. Hoogvelt noted the importance of indicators which have usually been "promoted to conditions for economic development" and thus have affected governmental and international organization policy-making: degree of urbanization, literacy rates and vocational training, newspaper circulation, political democracy (as measured by the existence of a multiparty system and the regular executive transfer through secret ballot elections), free enterprise, secularization (i.e., institutionalization of "rationality" as the dominant behavioral norm), degree of social mobility, occupational differentiation, proliferation of voluntary associations (e.g., trade unions), national unity (vs. ethnic and denominational factionalism), nuclear family patterns, and independent judiciaries.[12]

Finsterbusch compared these methods and found that the results of each method were very similar for all nations with over 5 million population in 1965, excluding North Korea and North Vietnam for lack of data. He concluded that the most developed countries were the United States, Canada, Australia and those of northwestern Europe. A middle layer was formed by the rest of Europe, Japan, Argentina, Venezuela, and South Africa, followed by: "the rest of Latin America, the Middle East and a sprinkling of Asian countries. At the bottom of the ladder are the remaining Asian and African countries."[13] Unesco has employed slightly different criteria in determining which countries are developed or developing, because in its 1974 *Statistical Yearbook* the developed countries are: all European countries, USSR, United States, Canada, Japan, Israel, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa.[14] According to Unesco, a certain number of countries are nevertheless at the bottom of the ladder and regarded as the "least developed countries." In 1976, they were: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Botswana, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Chad, Dahomey, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Haiti, Laos, Lesotho, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda, Western Samoa, Sikkim, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Upper Volta, the Arab Republic of Yemen, and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.[15]

In conclusion, developing countries are, first, the rule rather than the exception in a world where the population living in conditions of scarcity and permanent want far surpasses that living in welfare conditions of the

developed nations. It has been estimated that by 1980 the former will correspond to 3.25 billion, whereas the population of the affluent countries will be around 1.2 billion. Second, developing countries display a gamut of historical, social, economic and cultural features which, although related to similar features in developed countries, can be understood only when examined without cultural bias and historical prejudices.

**Is There Any Reason for "Developing"?**

Several theories have been put forward to explain the causes of underdevelopment, varying with the dominant social, political and even scientific paradigm of the time. Thus underdevelopment has been explained on the basis of environmental limitations on the individual (Dean's "tropical or semi-tropical ambience" or Gunton's "unhealthy climate"), the inferiority of the "races" which have originally populated the underdeveloped regions, or the poor moral or physical quality of the stocks resulting from interbreeding during the colonization period, etc. It is common to find texts which regard facts that are clear effects of underdevelopment as primary causes of it, as in this confused statement: "Under-development is an accident of history and is the product of two factors, both of which are the primary concern of librarians. These are illiteracy and poor economic growth. The provision of books is a major step towards curing the first and the provision of information is a necessity towards curing the second."[16]

The current view that underdevelopment should be historically explained within the economic context of global development has produced substantial evidence and disclosed new insights that have resisted serious criticism. This is due largely to the emergence of investigators from the developing countries themselves who have ignored ideologies that looked for the causes of underdevelopment within the underdeveloped system itself.

Bernstein stresses two important points in this approach: (1) social development is inseparable from economic development, and (2) a historical perspective should be adopted which goes beyond "the notion of (historical background) to the *theoretical comprehension of development and underdevelopment as historical processes.*"[17] A Brazilian economist, Celso Furtado, emphasized the relationship between developed and underdeveloped socioeconomic structures: "The advent of an industrial nucleus in eighteenth century Europe disrupted the world economy of the time and eventually conditioned later economic development in almost every region of the world."[18] Furtado added that the development of Western Europe first followed the boundaries of the political divisions prevailing in the continent at the time but later, in a "second line of development," the

frontiers were displaced "wherever there was still unoccupied land with characteristics similar to those in Europe itself." According to Furtado a third line of development in the expansion of the European industrial economy was characterized by the occupation of regions with old, precapitalist-type economic systems. Under the impact of capitalist expansion, these structures became hybrid: "part tending to behave as a capitalistic system, part perpetuating the features of the previously existing system. The phenomenon of underdevelopment today is precisely a matter of this type of dualistic economy." (This dualistic structure resembles the type of society which Riggs called "prismatic.") Santos, however, warned that analysis of the development process should not "concentrate on an abstract and formal relationship between two stages of a system (traditional-modern, capitalism-feudalism)."[19] For him, underdeveloped societies should be better termed "dependent societies" since they are subordinated to other countries which have control over the world market and the most advanced technology.

The concept of dependence has gained influence because it helps place these societies in a framework of historical relevance. For example, Hoogvelt recognized that: "underdevelopment in the contemporary world is a particular form of capitalist development, namely *dependent capitalism*. Both the famines in India and Bangladesh, and the fabulous fortunes of the Arab emirates are symptoms of the same dependency."[20] Of course, dependence is a conditioning factor affecting the economies of the dependent countries, as well as political, social and cultural life.

One irony in the expression "developing country" is that this process may become perennial, involving an immutable dependence on the developed world, which will continue developing no matter how slow its rate of development. According to Wallerstein, "by a host of indicators, the economic gap between the more- and the less-developed countries seems to be increasing rather than narrowing despite the presumed efforts of multitudes of groups of governments."[21] This is a gap that pervades all the economic and social life of developing countries. Returning to India after 14 years, Gardner observed that the gap was widening between library development in Great Britain and that in India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Burma and Turkey.[22]

An important aspect in understanding the process of development is the mobilization of resources and how national economic surplus is used; however: "The natural cycle of an underdeveloped country is that the pressures of the internal cadres and the external world for consumption are so great that the entire surplus is thus absorbed, leaving no significant

amount for collective social investment, and hence in the long run there is no significant amount for collective social investment."[23]

For present purposes, the most important features of the process of underdevelopment are:

1. Underdevelopment is not an accident, but a historically explainable fact.
2. Underdevelopment can only be fully understood as a historical process where both categories of development and underdevelopment dovetail as parasitical forms of economic organization in the framework of the capitalist mode of production.
3. Developing economies are basically of a dualistic type where archaic forms of economic organization coexist with modern forms.
4. Dependence on the economies of developed countries is a limitation on the full deployment of natural resources of developing countries, aiming at the general improvement of living conditions. Dependence permeates the national life of developing countries to a point where the sheer preservation of national identity and cultural values may be linked with an alien culture. (This may be stronger in newly independent than in the old developing countries, because in the former the bonds linking them to the ex-colonial metropoles are still relatively powerful.)
5. Within a developing country symptoms of dependence of a region on another may be found when a more developed area drains the resources and manpower of a less-industrialized area for its own benefit (another level of parasitical association).

The solutions that have often been tried within the structure of the capitalist mode of production have not fulfilled the expectations that the experience of the developed countries could be duplicated in the developing world. In fact, economic *growth* (which is different from development) has taken place in almost all the developing countries, sometimes at staggering rates. Such growth has clearly not been accompanied by the rupture of the relationship of dependence in international relationships and a thorough reform of those archaic internal structures that also hinder the independent process of development. However, this growth has helped strengthen the wealthy local élite. Ultimately, the economic problems of underdeveloped countries "can never be understood, let alone solved, out of the context of existing international trading relations."[24] This point is crucial to understanding developing countries.

Although over the years the terms of international trading have been deteriorating against the interest of developing countries, the public real-

ized this only after the oil-producing countries decided to sell oil for a higher price. This price increase was intended to allow these countries to cope with the growing prices of imported goods; it would also create the needed economic surplus for social infrastructural investments and prepare them for a future when oil reserves will be exhausted. In developing countries, prices of commodities and services imported from developed countries are often subject to constant increases, while the selling prices of raw materials and foodstuffs exported by developing countries do not increase to the same degree, and in fact suffer a relative decrease. As Hodder commented: "Present international trading relations perpetuate the traditional exchange of Western manufactures in return for raw materials and make very difficult the kind of rapid economic advance based upon overseas markets that played so large a part in the growth of prosperity at earlier stages in the economic history of most countries in the developed world."[25]

**Of Culture, Literacy and Climate**

The ethnocentrism of public opinion in advanced countries obscures the fact that the cultural heritage of some developing countries is far from negligible. To Lázár and Balazs, qualifying countries as developing "is an economic criterion, being often in apparent contradiction to the high spiritual and ancient cultural values of the less developed areas of the World."[26]

One cannot plan the development of libraries in the Middle East, for example, without considering its "extraordinarily rich cultural heritage."[27] As a matter of fact, "it is to the Middle East that one turns for the earliest records of great libraries of the ancient world."[28] Some of the present "developing" countries were the seed-bed of many of the most important achievements of civilization: Greece, India, China, Egypt, Iran, and even Korea, where movable printing types were in use as early as 1234 (almost two centuries before the same technique was "invented" in Europe).[29] Precolonial African culture has been increasingly unveiled for the admiration of the world, and its impact on some forms of contemporary art in developed countries has revealed its power. The fact that this culture is not literary does not diminish its importance, but serves as evidence that an "alternative" society could be built on the basis of oral communication.

The Western model of development has been centered on the ineluctable use of literacy. Some interesting points have been raised by Goody and Watt:

> Unlimited proliferation...characterizes the written tradition in general: the mere size of the literature repertoire means that the proportion of the whole which any one individual knows must be infinitesimal in comparison with what he obtains in oral culture. Literate society, merely by having no system of elimination, no "structural amnesia," prevents the individual from participating fully in the total cultural tradition to anything like the extent possible in nonliterate society. [In literate societies the individual becomes] a palimpsest composed of layers of beliefs and attitudes belonging to different stages in historical time.[30]

Civilization and development as they are understood in a technological society are thus closely linked with reading and writing skills. Although literacy is not the sort of panacea it was once supposed, it is overwhelmingly important in the communication process, the preservation and transmission of knowledge, and the diffusion of innovations. Developing countries have many reasons to strive for universal literacy. However, if it is true, as Lancour suggested, that "public libraries are attaining their fullest development in countries having the lowest rate of literacy,"[31] the relation between literacy and library development is clearly not a simplistic one.

If the importance of literacy is sometimes overstressed as an immediate cause of development, climate is usually blamed for the backwardness of developing countries (cf. the identification of tropical location with underdevelopment). This should have been another discarded deterministic concept, but the literature of librarianship shows this idea may still exist.[32] Critics of tropical climate underestimate certain important points. The variations of weather and temperature in the tropical region result in reasonably pleasant climates. The architecture and clothing developed by the indigenous population in most tropical countries is adequate to the rigors of the climate. The individual adapts to his natural environment. Paule Salvan, commenting on the adaptation of foreign students of librarianship to France, observed that French climate was a major obstacle to physiological and psychical adaptation in students from Africa and the Middle East.[33] A touch of understanding has been given by Borchardt from Australia: "It is not always true to say that underdeveloped areas are in fact underdeveloped because the inhabitants do not work hard enough. Quite often they work a great deal harder than we do, yet they achieve little because of lack of organization, lack of labor-saving devices and often because their own social structure prevents a fair distribution of earnings and profits."[34]

Ethnocentrism and parochialism can be dangerous blinders in assessing foreign cultures. The foreign observer may be looking for realities match-

ing those in his own country, and thus may ignore anything different, because it has no meaning to him—or worse, he may take the exception which is more conspicuous as the rule, because the latter is less outstanding.

## THE UNVARYING VARIABLES

### Book Publishing and Reading

A sort of circular causation obviously exists between publishing and reading: where literacy is widespread more books are published because they are expected to be read; and as people read they want to read more and buy more books. In such a system, the library plays an important role as a sort of captive customer that inevitably influences the planning and scale of book production. For Penna, Foskett and Sewell, a well-developed library service is essential: "if the vicious circle of low demand and poor supply is to be broken, for it can provide guaranteed sales for large quantities of material and by making this material available on free loan it can also create a reading, and eventually a book-buying public."[35]

Such a system needs a community of people with something to communicate. Authors, able to verbalize the ideas of others or as they spring from group efforts, are vital to a book industry. They may be artificially replaced by the importing of works created elsewhere, in times of intolerance or when the growth of industrial capacity exceeds a country's level of intellectual production. Benge sees insufficient local demand as one of the difficulties affecting bookselling and publishing in developing countries. Perry-Widstrand observed that in East Africa, with 75-80% illiteracy, libraries and books were not of much importance. Lacy stressed the "intimate relation between library development and the development of publishing in the developing countries..." and that "publishing cannot survive until libraries are there to buy books...."[36]

Philip Altbach has dedicated special attention to publishing in developing countries and has repeatedly insisted that industrial countries dominate knowledge distribution systems, while the Third World countries remain on the periphery of the world intellectual system. According to Altbach, the unequal distribution of the intellectual "products" is caused by a complex range of factors including historical events, economic relations, language, literacy, and the nature of the educational systems. The industrialized nations have benefited from the control they exert on the means of distribution of knowledge and have at times used their superiority to the

disadvantage of the developing countries.[37] Elsewhere, he emphasized the special role of libraries in stimulating the development of national publishing:

> Libraries constitute another key market for books. In the United States, the direct library market is about 11 percent of the total. In developing countries, the library market often constitutes an even larger proportion of the total book market. Libraries are particularly important for certain types of books. For example, about 80 percent of the children's books published in the United States are purchased by libraries. Scholarly books are also very dependent on libraries. In the United States, well over half of the books published by university presses are sold to libraries, and some observers estimate that the proportion is as high as 80 percent. In a Third World country like India, library sales of scholarly books are about 80 to 90 percent. Without library sales, it would be virtually impossible to publish scholarly books.[38]

Interestingly, Mexico has succeeded in creating a relatively strong book industry despite the recognized deficiency of libraries in that country and the insufficiency of funds for a regular program of acquisitions in the extant libraries.[39]

Davinson observed that developing countries have "lacked an indigenous book trade because in colonial days their needs were supplied from the 'mother country.'"[40] Colonial conditions having left these countries with no publishing tradition, often they would have to start from scratch. Some of the so-called "old" developing countries (e.g., Argentina, Brazil and Mexico) were more fortunate in that they achieved independence earlier and even in colonial times there was local book production (though Brazil had been a latecomer in the field; only in 1808 was printing established there on a definitive basis). The fact that the former "mother countries"—Spain and Portugal—had not maintained a level of economic development similar to that of other European countries may have led to a certain stagnation of their publishing industries, which then lacked the strength to compete with the former colonies.

In Latin America the issue of multilinguism, at least for literary culture, has not reached the same proportions as in some African countries; this may have been an asset in the development of local publishing. Because Spanish has a large audience outside Latin America, Mexican and Argentinian publishing could rely on exports to be able to produce on a large scale. One good external market for books in Spanish is Brazil, where professionals can easily understand Portuguese's sister language. In 1965, for example, Brazil ranked fourteenth among countries importing books from Mexico, being the second-ranked non-Spanish-speaking country (the first

being the United States, with its extensive Spanish-speaking population). Brazilian publishing, however, does not enjoy the same facilities, since Spanish-speaking persons cannot always cope with Portuguese, and also because of Portuguese restrictions on importing books from Brazil.

Newly-independent countries, facing a somewhat different situation, were probably the ones Altbach had in mind when he wrote:

> Traditional intellectual institutions and schools atrophied under colonialism in many cases. Employment in the "modern" sector was unattainable for those who did not know the European language, and gradually this language became the medium for commerce, politics, science, and government. The publication of books followed this current. The language of the colonizers seriously disrupted the indigenous languages, often retarding their development or even destroying them as expressions of a "high culture." The controversy between Bengali and English among intellectuals in Bengal in the past century is indicative of the divided loyalties and confusion which the imposition of Western languages caused.[41]

Some developing countries that publish in a dominant language not familiar in the developed world will probably experience a cultural isolationism, except perhaps in fiction. Developed countries, however, have generally paid little attention to the scholarly production of developing countries, as Unesco's *Index Translationum* suggests. D.C. Smith, Jr. rightly recalls how scholars of developing countries have been accustomed to drawing on the published resources of Europe and America, whereas the bibliographic tools of the developed countries "have been notably weak as to inclusion of materials from developing countries." Smith attributes this partly to linguistic inability in the developed countries to cope with the languages of developing countries (an explanation that does not cover everything because the "coverage of the many Asian and African publications in English and French has been very spotty"). With better bibliographic cooperation and more Americans with linguistic skills this situation would change.[42]

Scholarly publishing and bibliographic coverage come closer together through international information systems. Linguistic barriers to scientific communication have been accentuated; this is not only a matter of the linguistic code used to transmit ideas by the written word, but also a question of the indexing language employed in information storage and retrieval. Wellisch denounced the predominant use of a language in information retrieval, joining those who have lamented the diminishing participation of English in universal scientific communication. English may now predominate as an indexing language (the language of secondary

literature), but not for primary documents which are produced in 70-80 languages. Over half the documents abstracted in *Chemical Abstracts* are now in non-English languages, and other disciplines show a similar increase of documents in foreign languages. Wellisch elaborated on the position of developing countries in the international flow of information:

> Everybody is of course in favour of schemes that make it possible for developing nations to share in the information services created in developed countries, but this will remain idle talk as long as the language of these services presents difficulties to a majority of users in the developing countries or if they cannot react interactively with the system because of lack of sophisticated language abilities. The users in developing countries might even come to feel that they are deliberately excluded from the storehouses of the world's knowledge by being presented with information in a language which is seemingly simple and universal yet does not allow for full exploitation of the sources because its hidden difficulties and shifting vocabulary constitute serious obstacles to the formulation of queries and to information-seeking.[43]

Wellisch pointed out the need for a universal switching language for indexing, as has Menou in his study of the use of indexing languages in developing countries.[44]

Also relevant are those programs sponsored by American institutions either to develop local book industries or to distribute U.S. publications in the Third World. As early as the 1940s the diffusion of Fascist and Nazi propaganda led the American government to react. In Latin America, for obvious geopolitical reasons, the "good neighbor" policy helped disseminate American political ideas through cultural exchange, radio broadcasting, and films with "Latin American" culture and lifestyle as distorted by Hollywood film industry optics. In 1941 Hanke insisted on using books in this program: "by means of the printed page we may reach, with our novels and histories and poems, in short, with our American thought, an ever widening circle of readers in Latin America."[45] He mentioned that a book program should not only distribute books in English, but also stimulate translation of American books.

After World War II, the "cold war" led the United States to grow more concerned with international communication and information in order "to counter Soviet propaganda and bring other countries to a fuller and...more friendly understanding of the United States and its policies...." as well as "to make technical knowledge available as a means of assistance in economic development abroad." Such a program would be facilitated by the growing acceptance of English as a *lingua franca* "especially in those parts of the world where newly formed nations lack a common tongue."

Lacy estimated around 10 million people in the Middle East and Asia who could then read English reasonably well, a number that tended to increase and embraced "most of the men who control the governments and the economy of the area and most of those whose creative thought provides intellectual leadership and transmutes Western knowledge to meet Asian needs." His argument ended, "The Soviet Union enjoys no such advantage." For the non-English-speaking audience, locally produced materials in indigenous languages could be fostered through a subsidy which "need not be large and can be granted by paying for the rights and the translation or by buying a specified number of copies for free distribution, or both."[46]

This and other programs for distributing locally produced books were set up in different parts of the developing world. It is now almost ten years since such programs were fully deployed, but we still do not know their effect, especially regarding those aspects of interest to publishing and library development. Altbach noted one American program in India with negative aspects, in that the subsidized books tended to drive the more expensive unsubsidized, locally produced counterparts off the market.[47]

Probably the weakest point in publishing in the developing countries is distribution of books to selling points. Isenberg has identified the problems: (1) publishers place little stress on publicity, so that neither the public nor the booksellers are aware of publications; (2) publishers have no clear knowledge of potential markets and cannot accurately estimate a particular book's edition size; (3) bookshops are undercapitalized, have few return privileges, are poorly and unimaginatively organized, have little status, and as a result, have few books in stock; (4) rural areas are virtually bookless; (5) adequate national bibliographies and other reference tools do not exist, and books and their titles are hard to find; (6) the book trade is in general characterized by cutthroat competition.[48]

The deficiencies of public libraries, the weakness of publishing and book distribution systems, high illiteracy, scarcity, and a hot climate are some of the factors leading to the general conclusion that in developing societies reading is not an "established custom." Bonny sees the need in these societies to evolve "in a different pattern than in countries which now have an established library tradition," and in library development "education for reading may be an essential preliminary phase."[49] According to Benge, reading in developing countries is "largely utilitarian in the narrow sense" and "imaginative literature is not read very much, and it is often suggested that if there were more local novelists, reading habits would be different."[50] Escarpit reports that most books imported from France and Great Britain are schoolbooks by black African countries, where local production pro-

vides only 15% of the minimum need; foreign aid for schoolbooks is "insuffisant, dangereux, mais il existe." But as to what Benge calls "imaginative literature" the foreign contribution:

> est inexistant ou du moins très faible dans le domaine du livre de lecture général, notamment du livre littéraire. Or dans les régions déshéritées, c'est précisément le genre de livre que la production locale est le moins en mesure de fournir.[52]

Following a suggestion by Michelet, he further proposed a four-stage model: (1) provide a motivation for reading, (2) search for the appropriate motivation in the awareness of the masses of the people by themselves, (3) entrust this work to young writers not yet known in the literary field, and (4) base the contents on the daily problems of the masses without introducing irrelevant issues.

Statistics on reading habits in developing countries are scarce and outdated. Escarpit sees these statistics as limited in defining and separating literature's different levels. Popular writers like Ian Fleming, for example, could not be ignored in deference to any supposed literature standard. Escarpit's argument is very relevant:

> Mieux valent certainement des romans à la chaîne pour tous les lecteurs possibles que quelques lectures de haute qualité réservées à une élite. Cultiver les uns et les autres dans des ghettos séparés n'est en tout cas pas une solution. C'est le malheur des pays developpés que leur élite intellectuelle est numériquement assez importante pour constituer un marché du livre relativement rentable qui tend à s'autonomiser et à repousser le lecteur "populaire" vers une littérature industrielle.[52]

Reading patterns are naturally influenced by the publisher's selections of titles. The publishers' lack of concern for national aspirations and values introduces further problems. Despite the weak publishing market in developing countries, foreign publishing houses are investing funds there. In some countries this has been a coincidental aftermath of the book development programs funded from America in the 1960s. In Brazil, this investment has curiously led to traditional national firms being taken over by multinational competitors or put under governmental intervention to save them from falling into foreign hands. Describing publishing in Africa, Margaret Anderson mentioned that: "Some foreign texts, especially in mathematics and elementary science, could be easily adapted and/or translated locally for use by the newly literate in the appropriate vernacular, but the multinational firms have tremendous economic advantages in publishing, since their capital allows them to wait out the period needed to recover printing costs through domestic sales."[53] Publishing in developing countries clearly faces many constraints, some of them resulting from

multinational penetration of local book production and distribution, a point which should be considered in planning library development.

### The Educational System and the Use of Books

Asheim is among several authors who have described one characteristic situation of libraries in developing societies:

> The library's patron is typically a user of the premises, but not of the books. This, of course, reflects the teaching method which prevails in most parts of the world outside the United States....It is not so surprising that most reading rooms in libraries of all kinds are empty of books. Chairs and tables are the only requirements; the students will supply their own textbooks and the mimeographed copies of the lecture notes which will meet all of their reading needs.[54]

In discussing medical libraries in developing countries Reynolds identifies other obstacles to the development and recognition of libraries: "the failure of the students and faculty to make use of the library collection" and "great emphasis is placed on memorizing the textbook and collateral readings are almost never given." Reynolds offers his explanation: "Salaries are so low in many developing countries that faculty members must supplement their income with other positions so there is literally no time for use of the library. Also there is a reluctance to use the library because this would be an indication that the faculty member did not know everything about his subject that he should know."[55] Berninghausen further warned the American librarian going overseas as a consultant that: "In a university environment he may well discover that the chief use of the library is for 'study hall' purposes, a place for students to sit while they study their textbooks and lecture notes. If there is a reference collection, it is covered with dust, for the professors and students have almost no idea of a library as a provider of information relevant to the subjects they teach and study."[56] Benge agreed that in most ex-colonies, an authoritarian tradition affects intellectual life. This leads students to expect their teachers to provide the answers, and books are not used for individual inquiry.[57]

Asheim, in a 1965 article that anticipated his lecture the following year, laid down the recurring issues: "the straight-lecture, one-textbook, external-examination system" and the "parrot return of the textbook and the lecture notes" to pass the examination. Such features hinder the intensive use of books, independent study and thought. Lacy mentioned the dilemma of education by rote *v.* inquiry dependent on resources for inquiry, viz., library materials. Asheim added that "the student takes the prescribed courses with virtually no options, all within his own school."[58] Bonny also complained of insufficient reading skill and comprehension,

the tendency to learn a textbook almost by heart or to absorb only the teacher's notes, and the passive attitude of students in relation to the teacher.[59] After such a gloomy picture, one can hardly believe that in developing countries the formal transmission of knowledge through educational organizations had ever produced people with the minimum skills needed to run a less-than-primitive society.

In the ex-British colonies of Sri Lanka and Pakistan, Johnson tested the assumption that the commonality of British colonial administration in two countries in the same part of the world would have resulted in parallel library development. Despite these countries' similar heritage of colonial administration and independence within a year of each other, library evolution since then was not parallel. Johnson concluded that local conditions were likely to play a dominant role overriding the impact of a common colonial experience.[60] Should developing countries have waited to begin providing education, especially higher education, only after a sound university library system had become operational (preferably on the American or British patterns), or faced the educational dilemma on the basis of the meager resources available (including the one-textbook syndrome)?

Hutchings wanted to know how many books an undergraduate could master in one year in a given field of study. Discussing the different time which different texts would require to be fully comprehended (not only read), he asked whether the devotion to quantity in reading could be related to the number of inferior books resulting from the publish-or-perish dilemma. Contrast his argument with Asheim's: "Might we perhaps arrive at the conclusion that student needs could well be met in some situations by lending each his 'book kit' for the year? If, in addition, we provided space for students to sit down at a desk, not necessarily in a library, would not our library conception of the reader-book ratio and our reader service be altered overnight?"[61] Hutchings sees his question as concerning universities outside the United Kingdom, "where, in a sense, the questions glare out from a social situation which is unfamiliar and therefore the more vivid," but claimed he should not be misunderstood because he believed that varied reading was necessary "if for no other reason than to escape from the limitations of teachers and lecturers" and especially in fields where it is important to listen to different opinions.

The *quid* of the problem may be not on the availability of reading materials only. As Brazilian author Chaim Katz stated: "we see the knowledge instituted in the universities, in the post-graduate courses or in groups of professional education becoming more and more narrow, imposing on the

participants certain authors and their texts, very limited ways of thinking their fields, unique ways of *reading* these texts."[62]

A foreign observer may have a different way of looking into American reality:

> A mature student from Austria wrote: "Teaching methods are very different and some are painful in adjustment. American higher education and library schools take the student by the hand and lead him day and night. There is little freedom, and I still remember my astonishment when I was part of the following conversation: 'You are reading an interesting book. For whom do you read it?' One is not expected to read a book for himself, but always for a course."[63]

However, Dean noted in 1968 that "Dr. Asheim's strictures apply quite as appropriately to much of Europe as to the emergent countries of the world."[64] Dorothy Anderson's opinion on the nonuse of the library books probably reveals a more realistic approach: even when students are not using the bookstock, they are using facilities for study the library provides—peace, space and time. This is relevant where social conditions are restricted and many students live in crowded homes.[65] This situation is not exclusive to underdeveloped countries. In Japan only 20-30% of high school students using libraries read library materials; the rest study there.[66] A study done in Colombia revealed that personal libraries were a major information source for scientists, and interpersonal work relationships apparently constituted the principal source of information:

> In societies characterized by employment insecurity, in which power mechanisms are embodied in individuals, information is a greater source of power than elsewhere. To hold information exclusively is a guarantee of security; to transmit it ostentatiously enhances the social prestige of the one possessing the information. These inconsistencies do not further the flow of information and ideas, and the obstruction of communications observed sometimes has deep roots that are not at the level of individual psychology but at that of overall social structures.[67]

Hilton also observed the importance of private libraries in Latin America: "The members of the Latin American elite have traditionally been proud of their private libraries as proof positive of their genuine devotion to culture. A carefully developed library proved that the owner was a person of high cultural perception and industriousness....Latin America has had a splendid tradition of private libraries."[68] In the Middle East, Thompson noticed an "ineradicable strain of bibliomania." Private collections are big and rich enough to form the basis for significant public research libraries. Such private libraries "will surely have a wholesome effect on library developments."[69] It is therefore hard to accept one Indian librarian's

generalization that in the "developing countries the tradition of building personal libraries is unusual and unlike in Western countries very few gifts are forthcoming."[70]

Strickland's observation suggests that the outlook is not so bleak as some of the previous quotations might indicate. He noticed in Africa that "where the right books are available there is a voracious and increasing demand for them."[71] Thus, library development cannot be isolated from overall development of society; given certain conditions, the depressing image so often depicted of library services in developing countries may actually reveal strength and creativity.

### The Nonselection and Quasi-Acquisition of Materials

Librarians in developing countries are generally seen as very strict catalogers who usually lack the knowledge and cultural background required for selecting library materials. Lacking prestige, librarians work within systems suffering from the rigid dependency of the library administration on an authority inclined to interfere in professional library work. Librarians in developing countries thus decline to exercise the right to select library acquisitions.

Asheim stated that book selection as it is done in the United States is very uncommon in developing countries. In many of these countries: "a great part of the collection depends upon gifts and exchanges, and anything that comes in is accepted.... In any case the selector is seldom the librarian. In the universities and schools, selection is completely in faculty hands, often with final authority resting with a committee of deans or even the vice-chancellor."[72] In his opinion, the methods of bidding and purchasing through local bookstores result in selection by the bookseller. One may "wonder why a professional librarian is needed if there is no responsibility in his hands for book selection, reference work, reader services, or administrative control."[73]

Borchardt looked for reasons behind the apparent difficulties in developing-country book selection. Since most reviewing journals reflect an alien culture, librarians would have difficulty comprehending "the cultural background and critical apparatus on which book reviews are based":

> The critical assessment, the evaluative statement of contents, the nuances of innuendo, the faint praise and the slick allusion through proverb, quotation and hyperbole—all these may seem natural enough to the sophisticated reader of the *Times Literary Supplement* or of *Figaro*

> *Littérature, of Nature* or of *Scientific American*, but those to whom English or French or any other language of a highly industrialized, economically advanced, and culturally sophisticated country is not a native heritage, cannot properly benefit (if that be the right word) from the wit and wisdom, the vagueness and the vagaries of the professional book review. And let us be quite clear about this: no library school course so far designed can overcome this difficulty which the student of underdeveloped countries has to face in this respect.[74]

Borchardt saw the difficulties faced by the librarian aggravated by the need to select materials in different languages, and thus considered it natural for him to take short-cuts in the book selection process which do not seem orthodox to the foreign observer: "Faced with the demand to implement a crash program in technical and economic development, the locally bred librarian has little time to learn the refinements of book selection and probably little encouragement to use them."

Clearly, the process of selection is completely or mostly out of the hands of librarians in developing countries. What is not clear, however, are the conditioning factors that have led to such a situation provided that it has been accurately described and correctly applies to the majority of the countries concerned. Though both these authors have adopted different approaches, they reflect a basic assumption that librarians in these countries lack the necessary skills to carry out such activity.

Selection is only one aspect of the problem involving the diversification of local book production, national bibliographic control, announcement schemes and reviewing publications, and prompt availability of funds for the acquisition of current library materials. Librarians alone should not be blamed for deficiencies in selection. Funds are usually scarce and, when available, must be immediately allocated (in Latin America "in the struggle for university funds, libraries are usually also-rans"[75]). Selection is understandably usually made on an ad hoc basis, involving faculty and other users' suggestions. Librarians in developing countries will need to select both current *and* retrospective materials, purchased or donated, in unusual sociocultural contexts.

The selection process inevitably reflects the library structure. It is not that selection and weeding are not valid or necessary; but one cannot transplant the methods of industrialized countries to the whole spectrum of developing countries. Furthermore, librarians' indulgence concerning selection of gifts in particular may be largely conditioned by hoarding for probable future use. When money is scarce, any useful gift is welcome. Selection is inevitably uneven because of budgetary uncertainty, administrative whims

and systematic inflation. However, six years ago Veenstra and Restrepo wrote that in many countries of Latin America the new library professional: "is finding a greater acceptance of the need for improving libraries, and is beginning to actively challenge the deterrents to library growth including insufficient budgets, inadequate buildings and involved purchasing procedures. Particularly on the academic scene he is finding increasing support from his library users and from university administrators."[76]

Lacy wrote in 1966 that the typical Latin American library "has almost no funds for acquisition of books at all" and "every dollar for a library has to compete with desperate and necessary needs for a variety of other social services in the country."[77] Asheim enumerated the problems regarding purchase from abroad by libraries in developing countries:

> There is the problem of foreign exchange. There is the problem of the bibliographical tools. There is the problem of limited financial support, coupled with the cost of books priced for a market at a much higher standard of income, and the additional costs of handling and of mark-up on importations. There is the problem of import taxes. There is the problem of the conflict between the foreign government's insistence on delivery before payment is approved, and our publishers' insistence on payment in advance. There is the problem of language and of the adaptability of foreign books to local needs even if the language is the same.[78]

Financial stringency leads to administrative control and red tape. Faculty members—usually lecturers trained abroad or bound to foreign values—call for the original edition of a foreign book when a reliable locally-produced translation is available. At least one Brazilian scientific journal is written almost exclusively in English, its aim being to reach the foreign audience rather than to be read by the Brazilian undergraduate lacking a functional knowledge of English. Ideological subservience to foreign values is thus disguised by supposed concern with international communication. Artificial consumer stimulation and built-in obsolescence further contribute to the volume of publishing, that in time will affect the meager budgets of libraries in developing countries. Overlapping of abstracting and indexing journals is another symptom of the competition. In our own field librarians must face faculty pressures to subscribe to *Library Literature*, *Library and Information Science Abstracts*, *Information Science Abstracts*, and *Bulletin Signaletique*, and eventually the English edition of the Russian *Referativnyi Zhurnal (Informatics)*. Reutilization of a text under new covers and different title is also not uncommon. Finally, while anthologies group materials otherwise scattered in journals and books, most or all of the texts in question can often be located in the library.

Benge mentioned the additional problem of acquiring older material. One solution is to buy these in microform when equipment is available for reading and copying. (Equipment and spare parts, however, can also be very difficult to obtain in a developing country.) Menou has even estimated that "up to 80% (i.e., several thousands) of documents of great value, such as ancient documents or administrative records, are being detained by foreign institutions. In order to rebuild a collection, it is necessary to send a mission abroad for location, selection, and microcopying of documents at a minimum cost of $3 per unit."[79]

The acquisition and compilation of retrospective bibliographies may be occasionally hampered: "in former 'colonial' territories where libraries are often under-provided with retrospective records because the materials for their development have been removed to the libraries of their former colonial masters....There are many examples of the best library collections relating to a particular country being now held in the libraries of the former imperial powers rather than in the emergent nation itself."[80] Wars and colonial conquests have also contributed to the wealth of libraries in developed countries. Books and documents were prized loot. After World War II, for example, the "U.S. Air Force airlifted massive collections of captured German, Italian, and later Japanese documents back to the United States"—a practical way to increase library holdings.[81]

In most developing countries foreign materials acquisition impinges more on academic and special libraries, with resulting effects on scientific and technological research development.[82] Moravcsik and Ziman asked: "How can research be possible in a country where the *Physical Review* comes a year later, where the best library has no more than tattered copies of the undergraduate textbooks of a generation back...?"

> Access to journals in Paradisia (developing countries) is limited because the most important journals are published in the scientifically advanced countries, because they are expensive and must be paid for in hard currency, and because they are heavy and quick access by airmail costs more. Reports and reprints reach Paradisian research centers only sporadically, because most of these documents originate in scientifically advanced countries, are expensive to ship abroad, and are produced only in limited numbers which usually are sent to the most prestigious research groups, i.e., those in advanced countries.

They believed that "only a deliberate policy of internal social justice" could keep the world scientific community together "in what may be a very hard and divisive political era"—and hinted at a solution:

> What would be the annual cost, for example, of sending free copies of the major scientific journals to all accredited scientific institutions in the

> less-developed countries? Perhaps ten million dollars (who knows?), which is only a tiny fraction of yearly expenditure on scientific information in the advanced countries. The problem is not whether it *ought* to be done, but in deciding which of many appropriate social institutions...should actually bear the cost.[83]

Five years earlier, Arntz and Brugghen had suggested the developing countries would be done "a great favour if richer countries were to send them regularly their latest reports" which are hard to obtain with soft currency.[84] A recent account by Siddique shows the difficulties that a developing country (here, Bangladesh) must face in regularly receiving journals from advanced countries, the subscriptions for which were paid through reputable subscription agencies. The local mail service is reportedly not the only one to be blamed. A whole chain of circumstances—the wrapper used by the publisher which seems not to take into account the vicissitudes of surface mail, poor geographical knowledge revealed by the gross errors on address labels, the cynicism of publishers which refuse to replace missing issues—indicates that publishers and booksellers in developed countries could be more cooperative.[85] Librarians in Brazil are used to receiving parcels labeled *Rio de Janeiro, Argentina*.

**Sisyphus and the Minotaur: The Torment of Cataloging and Classification**

Perhaps unnatural and pedantic, the metaphor nevertheless reflects a condition described by foreign observers. Cataloging and classification in developing countries involves endless repetition of a chore without apparent practical result, and intricacy of work itself. The metaphor is weak in that it suggests something unwanted, punishment imposed on men; in fact, "Librarians in the underdeveloped countries, both trained and untrained, are devoted to cataloging and classification."[86] Asheim subtitled his 1965 article on university libraries in developing countries "Devotion to Classification," and noted the "several years of uncataloged backlog to which no user can have access."[87]

Ten years later, a British observer wrote: "Most Third World cataloguing departments are piled high with books....Backlogs caused by complex cataloguing rules keep materials off the shelves at the time they are most useful: when they are new and up-to-date."[88] Addressing would-be American library consultants in developing countries, Berninghausen warned against the risk of involvement with useless elaboration or improvement of cataloging techniques since "the local librarians are impressed, sometimes obsessed with the 'science' of cataloging, and the American consultant can

spend his time with the librarians, avoiding the heart of the problem—which is to secure the interest and understanding of the importance of libraries by outsiders such as government officials, university administrators, faculty, and students."[89] Borchardt agrees: consultants should pay more attention to proselytizing and propaganda, especially in public libraries, because "the creation of a favorable climate of opinion is often more essential than the application of correct cataloging rules."[90]

Librarians devoted to cataloging clearly will not relinquish this devotion in favor of cooperative cataloging systems, so books will inevitably be cataloged as often as there are libraries that have them. Asheim, for instance, has criticized the classified catalog which "turns out to be only a shelflist, one card per book, without index, and without cross-references."[91] Thompson further questioned the use of the Universal Decimal Classification and the classified catalogs in the Middle East, raising these questions: Who are we to set up the dictionary catalog as a gospel when many of our research libraries are making drastic changes in their subject cataloging policy? Who are we to condemn the classed catalog, which has often proved an admirable instrument when properly constructed? Can we really defend systematic arrangement of books on the shelves of research libraries as superior to arrangement by size and *numerus currens*?"[92] Redmond accepted the use of classified catalogs in countries with more than one local language, or where these are not the major scientific languages.[93]

Classified collections in a library with closed stacks (like a national library) may be irrelevant and may even represent a waste of space. Planning advisers for the reorganization of the Biblioteca Nacional of Brazil in 1945 recommended "adoption, with modifications, of the Dewey Decimal Classification System and Library of Congress subject headings"; the recommendation was implemented.[94] Asheim was convinced "that a great deal of the bootless involvement in picayune details of classification and cataloging which one finds in many foreign libraries derives in part from American instruction, both here and abroad."[95] Birdsall, using Tönnies's concepts of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* in his attempt to understand the social process leading to library development, commented that "the development of efficient techniques is a characteristic of *Gesellschaft*" and: "it is possible that the concern for techniques in developing countries is a reflection of the social change that is occurring in those nations. Is it possible that the developing nations' preoccupation with techniques is not, as most American observers seem to think, simply a narrowness of view, but rather an appropriate and a necessary response to their particular stage of development?"[96] Hilton noted the confused orientations given by

foreign consultants (especially from different cultures):

> A U.S. representative tells the librarians that they must adopt the Library of Congress classification. Then a European adviser arrives and counsels that the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC) be adopted. The trend in Latin America is toward the UDC, but the Americans can offer more financial support. This is enough to give the poor Latin American a case of schizophrenia. The only solution is for the advanced countries to agree on a common policy so that the recipient country is not caught in a crossfire between conflicting systems.[97]

Even a simple technique like providing title entries in a card catalog may reflect two different approaches—English and American—with ensuing problems for the country receiving advice from experts who express conflicting views.[98]

The whole cataloging system, to McCarthy, was "a monstrous waste of human and material resources, and it is western librarians who are responsible, not the librarians of the Third World." An example of this is the forced adoption of AACR/ISBD as international standards which are inconvenient for developing countries. For Brazil a more "typical situation would be the production of a university's first union catalogue, and they would have been better advised to adopt the UK version of the AACR."[99] At that time, a locally produced translation of the American text of AACR was available in Brazil.

Works cited above reveal a common concern with a situation considered typical of developing countries and hampering library development and the image of the library profession. Library work too easily becomes identified with a fanatical dedication to cataloging that implies estrangement from the public. Piles of material await processing in libraries of developing countries. Would simplified cataloging rules help solve the problem? The Library of Congress or *British National Bibliography* catalog cards are produced with relative cataloging complexity, a service that can reduce labor costs and accelerate routine cataloging in great general libraries with a consensus among potential users. Thus the complexity of cataloging in itself is hardly the kernel of the question. This must be sought in unwillingness to cooperate, in actual difficulties which have to be faced by the magnitude of a task similar to establishment of national or local processing centers.

**The Crucial Dilemma: Books for Use v. Books for Posterity**

Foreign observers' account of librarianship in developing countries describe some of its most conspicuous features or characteristic defects.

Though great collections of books and manuscripts are to be found, there are many problems: weeding is nonexistent; the librarian or custodian is personally accountable for library materials; some books circulate, but not the few magazines available; counters separate the reader from the books; too many book collections have no access; books are generally in locked cases and closed stacks. Shelves can be so tall that books can't be reached or identified; browsing and the benefits of serendipity are denied library users; entrance control points force users to establish "possession of clean hands and a pure heart"; book use by underclassmen may be virtually prohibited; elaborate precautionary systems guard against book removal; registration fees or cash deposits are required for borrowing. Clearly, library "services" aim at protecting the book *from* the user, not *for* the user.[100] Impressed by such characteristics, Berninghausen wrote:

> In many parts of the world to which American library consultants have gone, the idea of a library is limited. A library is a collection of old manuscripts and books, rare and valuable. It is *not for use* by anyone except the most respected scholars. It is not related to a curriculum. It is not related to daily life. In such a library it is natural and justifiable policy to keep everything under lock and key. There is no need for a circulation system. There is no need for general reference services. Of course, there are no open shelves. And although we tend to ignore the fact, American libraries of rare books and manuscripts are operated under very much the same policies.[101]

It would be anachronistic to infer that these descriptions refer to the current situation. Asheim wrote on the basis of his experiences mainly between 1961 and 1966, when he was director of the International Relations Office of ALA. Berninghausen probably developed his acquaintance with developing countries in the early 1960s.[102] But for Benge, the situation had not changed by 1970: "If sufficient money is spent on libraries, there is a necessary emphasis on the preservation of those materials which they happen to have acquired and the librarian is primarily a custodian; the books must be locked up. In unpropitious times (and many countries have not known any others) the preservation of things, like personal survival, becomes a virtue and a duty."[103]

Concern for preservation leads to hoarding: "the older libraries in developing areas contain so much 'dead wood' which could profitably be transferred to a storage facility."[104] Cooperative deacquisition, proposed by Rydings, may look more attractive than the sheer elimination of old books: "A foreign adviser...may go wrong in recommending that old and out of date library materials should be discarded, or that access to books should be as open or liberal as possible. This may be a mistake even in university libraries, where material cannot be replaced."[105]

Emphasis on preservation may reflect an inevitable stage in the historical evolution of a country's library services. For example, China's first stage in library development saw a long period of "accumulating stocks," lasting through feudalism into the late Ching dynasty (1840).[106] "Personal accountability" in the Middle East and Latin America is strongly linked with the praiseworthy value conferred to books in those societies. Furthermore, the intrinsic permanence attributed to the written word contributes to its support, so that in Brazil, books and journals are classified as "permanent assets" for budgetary and accounting purposes. This is rather ironic in a country where environmental/climatic conditions are usually a serious handicap to conservation of library materials. Despite this awkward classification, librarians in Brazil have not been subject to the system of personal accountability. But with books part of the institution's assets, periodic inventories may be required and discarding books can involve complicated procedures.

The burden through the years of preserving bibliographic and manuscript treasures in the conditions of financial scarcity prevailing in developing countries cannot be underestimated. In many of these countries, especially in the Middle East and Asia, present-day access to records of paramount importance to the history of man has been secured by diligence of individuals and institutions in almost unbearable conditions. Political and social changes may have caused treasures to pass from the custody of rich individuals to the responsibility of states which as a rule could not cope financially with such a problem on a national scale, particularly when the society had more demanding needs. France still has millions of uncataloged volumes scattered through its public libraries almost two centuries after they were confiscated from the aristocracy. These books are as well protected from readers as those in developing countries. In Brazil, the preservation of library materials came from Lisbon with Dom João VI, king of Portugal, when he fled from the Napoleonic forces in 1808. Suddenly a tropical colony without schools, universities, or public libraries was swamped with 60,000 volumes (100,000 volumes 28 years later).[107] By then the population was not over 4 million, and the number of literates in Rio was probably less than the holdings of what became the national library of Brazil. The richness of such a collection has been a permanent challenge to the Brazilian authorities and professionals. The conditions of its preservation have been the object of study of national and foreign advisers and even a 1966 congressional commission of enquiry. In his testimony to this congressional commission, a former director of the Biblioteca Nacional commented that the king of Portugal had sent such a rich collection to a country with almost total illiteracy and no users but a

handful of intellectuals. As the years passed it became a reading place serving secondary-school pupils because the specialized audience for whom it was destined did not exist. Its holdings were mainly humanistic and may have been used by a few scholars, but the library "never played the relevant role it ought to play in Brazilian culture because the cultural conditions of the country (at that time) were far below the level of the holdings of the Biblioteca Nacional."[108]

Because of the lack of public libraries, national libraries in developing countries commonly act as public libraries, which may threaten the best preservation of materials supposedly collected for posterity. In Latin America, it was observed that national libraries serve all types of readers.[109] This point could not have been missed by Asheim: "Very frequently the national library must, by default, serve a public library function, and as a result it is neither an adequate national library nor an adequate public library."[110] Dorothy Anderson noted that in developing countries arrangements will differ from those of developed countries—a public library or documentation center performing the functions of a national library, a university library with national library responsibility. For her "functions are the first priority," "not in what building or under what identity they are at first carried out."[111] Burston observed that "national-public libraries are a feature of developing countries."[112]

To propose that librarians make efforts to protect books from readers would require further qualification. Of course in national libraries the more protection the better, since books must be preserved for as many future generations as possible. In other types of libraries, excessive concern with collection integrity can be regarded as a means to secure that a given book may be useful for the largest number of readers. Book theft is not unique to developing countries, but in one university library in Colombia students raise their hands at the exit and surrender to guards who search them for materials illegally taken from the library. Surprisingly, the students, who had never hesitated to demonstrate against errors and abuses of the government and university administration, seemed to accept such humiliating searching as a natural procedure.

Asheim in 1965 wrote: "Service, getting books into the hands of readers, is not the primary aim of the libraries. Acquisition of books, careful organization of them, and their preservation, yes; quick and easy access to them, no. And if access is not the objective, then some of the questions we consider to be natural turn out to be irrelevant."[113] The time has come for less impressionistic inquiries and more systematic investigation of factors

contributing to the library situation in developing countries. As Asheim observed:

> There are usually reasons for what people do, even if they are not our reasons. Before we condemn out of hand a pattern of behavior which happens not to fit our preconceptions, we should try to find out what the reasons were that led to it. We may still not accept the reasons as valid for us, but we may discover a different context of validity for evaluating the behavior pattern and its use by others.[114]

**Cooperation: A Plea for Dissension**

Asheim was greatly impressed with the coordination of university libraries in developing countries, and especially with the cooperation and proliferation of faculty, departmental and institute libraries. He wrote: "Each of these separate libraries in a university may have its own rules and regulations, its own systems—or no system at all—of cataloging and classification, its own restrictions on use, and complete independence of any centralized administrative oversight. There is seldom co-operation among them for exchange of information, interlibrary loan, or coordinated acquisition."[115]

Whitten and Minder confirmed considerable resistance to the idea of cooperation in Turkey, and in establishing an educational program in librarianship in that country they paid particular attention to a course on cooperation and networks emphasizing "the behavioral aspects of cooperation, as well as the technical aspects of networks." And they considered that: "the basic problem of cooperation in Turkey is not a matter of American techniques to be learned, because cooperation depends on culturally determined sets of personal relationships, and the cooperation assumptions of one culture cannot be transferred unmodified to another."[116] Holloway considered the situation in Turkey to be characteristic of the Middle East in general, where "personal rivalries and jealousies and lack of flexibility within the universities themselves have worked against any centralized administrative system although the advantages of this should be obvious to the more far-sighted of the academic staff."[117] Munn observed that in developing countries there is little or no coordination of effort and only such cooperation as individual officials permit; libraries tend to be concentrated in one geographical area and the rest of the country is very poorly served. Widespread social recognition of the importance of libraries may eventually lead to a haphazard proliferation of libraries: "Many of the developing countries are characterized by a bewildering array of libraries, established over the years by various ministries, departments and institutes as need and opportunity arose. Development is

generally unplanned and unco-ordinated."[118] Benge had already identified a tendency of developing countries to imitate the developed nations, and despite suggestions in favor of coordination of at least all government departmental libraries in African countries, "departmental pressures usually frustrate such a process."[119] Arntz wrote that:

> For documentation to be fully effective, the highest degree of co-operation must be achieved in the developing country. If a unit, a user, or an administration no longer knows what its neighbor is doing, what his requirements are—i.e., if there is a lack of co-ordination and co-operation—information can be stored unused in a place where it is not needed and be lacking in a place where it is.[120]

These views reflect two facets of the problem of "selfish management" which assails libraries in developing countries. Cooperation will hardly develop where coordination is avoided. Whereas cooperation can be developed on the basis of informal arrangements between librarians, coordination requires more formal decisions and is expected to occur as the result of external injunction. However, ad hoc cooperative schemes have ben revealed as prone to failure, and planning for cooperation has become mandatory as in other aspects of library service. It is easy to pay lip service to library cooperation, but extremely difficult to implement it.[121] Coordination and cooperation must be considered as targets of national library planning and cannot be left to whims of librarians and government officers. The state has the responsibility to ensure a fully coordinated library service and the required level of cooperation by means of specific and adequate legislation.[122]

It may be true, as Benge suggested, that library development in developing countries has been greatly conditioned by the imitation of models imported from industrial nations. At the time most of this importing took place, cooperation and coordination had not attained the primacy now reached in developed countries. It is not surprising, for example, that in the first general conference of Unesco in 1946 the decision was made to foster the promotion all over the world of public library systems on the Anglo-Saxon/Scandinavian model.[123] Campbell wrote that public libraries in developing countries have been following the models of other countries and that research has to be carried out to seek the most effective ways of meeting local requirements.[124] The pilot public libraries established in different countries with either international financial support or local funds were planned to give the population the concept of a modern public library oriented to provision of services to a wide range of users and stressed its superiority to extant libraries, so that a sort of superiority complex and isolation naturally developed. They were not models stressing the need of a systemic approach to organization of library services.[125]

Parker highlighted the issues involving library cooperation in developing countries. His conclusions show the complexity of resource-sharing organization and the number of factors involved in breaking the vicious circle that hinders cooperative developments. A basic objective of any resource-sharing program must clearly be improving services to users by the libraries involved. But:

> A fundamental obstacle to the attainment of this objective in most developing countries is, quite simply, the lack of resources. Library collections are often inadequate to meet the needs of users, and even when they are adequate, are often underused. Lack of qualified staff prevents the proper development, either of document collections or of user education programmes, and even where this is not a problem, librarians often have to struggle with inadequate finance, cumbersome organisational structures and a lack of basic legislative support. A lack of resources, far from encouraging sharing, often produces the opposite effect. Librarians cannot share what they do not have, and may well feel that, if too little is shared between too many, everyone will end up with less than they had to begin with.[126]

Rydings said that the overall sparsity of library resources in developing countries makes any attempt to share them meaningless; libraries with collections too small to meet the needs of their own clients cannot make them available to a wider audience.[127]

Library cooperation in developing countries has been of growing concern for librarians in developed countries. The subject has been studied in detail by Bowden, and the IFLA/Unesco Pre-Session Seminar for Librarians from Developing Countries (Antwerp, 1977) studied resource sharing in these countries.[128] Describing characteristic defects in cooperation and coordination (and in other areas of library service) doesn't constitute detailed analysis of the situation leading to the understanding of its causes and resolution. Gelfand understood that the lack of coordination of Latin American university libraries was historically traceable to the evolution of higher education in that continent as largely autonomous faculties and institutes occupying separate premises and "often quite distant from each other, both physically and socially." For Gelfand, the building of libraries in the faculties has probably contributed to the possessiveness they display whenever coordination and cooperation are envisaged.[129] Parker saw a serious obstacle to resource sharing in the uncooperative behavior of the librarians themselves, often due to personal or professional rivalries based in "a sense of insecurity arising from real or imagined threats to employment or status associated with the idea of co-operation." He suggested that such behavior may arise from financial constraints threatening the library itself and consequent defensive attitudes and the "seige mentality."[130] In a certain sense, Parker's arguments match Asheim's in 1966:

> Where opportunities are few, every other person with similar qualifications and interest is much more urgently a potential rival. Each accomplishment by someone else spells a danger to one's own position in the scramble for advancement to the few good jobs that exist. Where such a situation prevails, it is considered merely foolhardy, not admirable, to subordinate one's own interests to some broader good.[131]

Something in the general social organization of developing countries hinders the development of cooperative efforts and curtails effective library association, and causes the absence of union catalogs, lists of serials, national bibliographies and other tools that require a broad collaboration of individuals and institutions. A widespread notion holds that developing countries may use the experience of developed nations to avoid repeated errors and lost time "reinventing the wheel." They would be in a position to skip certain stages of development and develop in a faster tempo than the developed countries.[132] However, Rydings argued that critics from developed countries may expect developing countries to run before they can walk, when they urge establishment of cooperative library ventures when the necessary infrastructure is lacking.[133] Commenting on Asheim's approach, Birdsall identifies the situation he described with some characteristics intrinsic to the primitive social organization that Tönnies called *Gemeinschaft*.[134]

If some of the characteristic defects of libraries in developing countries considered so far can be explained within the restricted framework of the specific paradigm of librarianship in particular countries (i.e., at the level of microlibrarianship), the existence or not of obstacles to coordination and cooperation can only be understood when examined within the larger framework of societal structure and the social relations prevailing in a society at large. Thus it is at the level of macrolibrarianship that librarians in developing countries should attempt to find ways to achieve the necessary coordination of library services and the cooperation that now form part of the concept of user-oriented libraries.

**The Wealthy and the Impecunious**

In countries with limited funds for libraries, special libraries usually display a relative abundance of resources, while public libraries struggle to survive. As early as 1959, Strickland observed that African university and special libraries were adequate, since their users were those who normally held authority and could make funds available. As Gunton wrote: "There are so many clamorous tongues seeking every penny in the national purse that libraries can be regarded, at best, as desirable but impossible, at worst,

something not scheduled for development until 20 years hence."[135] An American librarian visiting a developing country, according to Asheim, would be struck by the almost total absence of public libraries. The so-called public libraries were more public study rooms for students using their own books, or for scholars making use of the rare materials kept there.[136] British librarians observed that in 1964 the situation of public libraries in the underdeveloped countries of the Commonwealth was extremely poor. The functions of libraries were not generally appreciated, and funds received were not sufficient.[137] Limited resources is the continuing problem of public libraries in developing countries:

> Public libraries are not necessarily a top priority even when they do feature in a country's development plan: there are always other more rewarding and more obvious schemes by which it would seem that the economy of the country or its image abroad or its natural resources might be developed. Public libraries should be seen, in the terms that economic planners understand, as a growth investment: not now but in 20 years' time will the cost benefit be apparent.[138]

Gilmore questioned the relevance of libraries in developing countries; the public library at least does not play a very large role. In these countries, libraries are just as elitist as in developed countries if not more so, because so much of the population is and will remain illiterate.[139]

Asheim and Gilmore described the more fortunate counterpart of the impecunious public libraries: the research and special libraries. These follow very closely the pattern of special libraries in developed countries, and since they are an integral part of the development process, they are usually well financed and well staffed.[140] Salaries are usually higher in special than in public libraries, with the result that library "schools in the developing countries, consciously or unconsciously, [tend] to seek to produce a librarian who is specifically oriented toward the satisfaction of the library needs of the intellectual elite of his particular country. There is rarely sufficient emphasis on the needs of the less privileged socio-economic groups, neo-literates and so forth."[141] Dean attempted to produce a different kind of librarian, but knew his efforts would be useless because the best salaries were paid by academic and special libraries.

The failure of some public libraries in developing countries has sometimes been attributed to attempts to extrapolate to a different social milieu the Anglo-Saxon kind of public library.[142] However, the successful special libraries found in developing countries much more accurately replicate those found in industrialized countries than the public libraries. Yet they have had support, and in most cases provide efficient services. This could

be explained by the fact that special libraries have a recognized function in a developing society: their users have been submitted to learn to appreciate and use information, and it is through scientific and technical literature they establish communication with their peers. Many have been trained in developed countries, and they take home experience in the use of library materials. The function of the special library is manifest.

When the potential clientele of public libraries understand the function of this kind of library, they soon use the resources available and may be frustrated if service is interrupted. It is unlikely, however, that the triadic structure of public library function in society is fully apprehended. As a rule, the educational role is stressed, not information or recreation. Public libraries tend to be crowded with students from the primary to university levels.

This concern with function has appeared in the literature about developed countries too. It seems that whereas in developing societies public libraries have a more important function in education, in industrial societies school and university proliferation has reduced the educational role.[143]

To sell the idea of public libraries in developing countries, librarians must face the increasing competition of mass media. In Jamaica, the rural librarian has to strive to keep the public interested in reading after the impact of radio and television.[144] The paramount importance of the educational role of public libraries in developing countries was observed by Benge, who admitted that in some of these countries, this kind of library should be set up in schools instead of a wholly separate system.[145]

In brief, public libraries all over the world will have to adjust to the constant changes in societies at large. The very permanence of the public library system in developed countries as a viable entity, the obstacles that have hindered the development of other library systems, and factors affecting reading activity are aspects still requiring investigation.[146] That public libraries in developing countries have depressed foreign observers (who were often looking at institutions supposedly set up according to the model provided by developed societies) may indicate that the Anglo-Saxon public library cannot be copied in those countries. They are transplants that tend to be rejected by the host organism. Hutchings expressed with charming ingenuity the realization that public libraries should not be standard replicas of an ideal model:

> Never in Malaya did I sense the appalling human degradation of our industrial slums, the grey monotonous streets, the grey, ungroomed

people, some of them trying with a queer affectation to be different. Perhaps public libraries may bring some light into such dark places here at home, and thereby contribute something to the greatest happiness of the greatest number, but I falter before the suggestions for Malaya. In any case, do libraries exist for happiness, or is their proper object to disturb? Is this idea that libraries make for happiness not something which merely emphasises our consciousness of dull lives lived in dull places in depressing climates?...

Of course, public libraries will develop in some form or other in these newly-developing countries. But I would like to think of them as an organic growth, associated with the growth of literacy and an endemic literary culture, changing as the population grows older and more sophisticated, beginning in the towns and extending beyond as time and circumstance and resources dictate.[147]

## OF ETIOLOGY AND THERAPEUTICS

I have tried to highlight the most outstanding characteristics described by foreign observers as being typical of underdeveloped librarianship. Other symptoms could have been included, e.g., those affecting education for librarianship, professional status and prestige, the use of foreign aid, the inexpressive intellectual production of librarians in those countries associated with the scarcity of library journals, etc. Yet the mere amassing of symptoms would be useless without analysis in order to identify the causes of such "pathological" condition and, if possible, the necessary therapy to cure the disease.

Especially in the second chapter of his book, Asheim delved into some aspects that he considered to be conditioning factors in the social system that could explain the deficiencies: the aristocratic tradition and its negative effects on the ideal of universal education, deference to age, authority and the past, characteristics of *Gemeinschaft* in social relations and familial organization, and the intensification of this complex by colonialism. For Asheim, however, colonialism did not ban the negative aspects previously extant in the traditional societies, but rather supported the "existing predispositions in the culture,"[148] and its influence went on even after the official abolishment of colonialism.

The importance of the colonial past cannot be underestimated, and it is not easy for developing countries to throw off the colonial imprint:

> Although the present generation is in revolt against its colonial or other previous authorities, it comes from a tradition that defers to authority; although it has overthrown the political domination of the colonial powers, it is still under the influence of their symbols, rituals, and rules;

> thus the devotion to outmoded systems and routines, to ceremonies and protocol, to models and examples which derive from the very system they imagine they are repudiating.[149]

Asheim has probably misunderstood the fact that the process of independence from a colonial metropolis does not always imply the taking over of political power in the newly independent country by the most forward-looking groups of the population. Formal political decolonization may be an apparently simple task, and other less conspicuous forms of domination may still be applied, now not only by the former metropolis but by a new powerful country. Local economic groups and individuals will operate as front-men of the neocolonial powers. Under the thin varnish of political independence, the country remains tied to foreign and transnational interests that have a deep and wide influence in the developing societies. The concept of dependence described earlier helps provide a less subjective approach to understanding the process of underdevelopment and how it influences the varied spectrum of social life in developing countries.

The weak aspect of this and similar approaches is that they tend to assume that resistance to change for a better society is rooted in traditions that the society praises. They do not acknowledge that unwillingness to change may be the aspiration of minority fragments of developing societies—precisely those that retain power and strive to preserve their privileges.

If the causation for poor library development in these countries depends on the quality of education, then why is the system of education like it is? Will a formal change in the educational system stimulate development of library services? Jackson found two causes contributing to the failure of Latin American countries to overcome the inferior situation of library services by means of a national plan for library development: (1) the failure of librarians to convince educators and those in charge of national planning of the role that libraries and documentation centers must play in meeting national information needs; and (2) the failure of librarians and documentalists to coordinate efforts.[150] Yet it seems naïve to think that training librarians in salesmanship, and having them sign a truce for their quarrels and begin to work cooperatively, will result in an effective national library and information system.

How many millions of dollars have been spent in aid to library development in developing countries in the last 30 years? Have the results been commensurate with the money spent? What has been the beneficial role of foreign library advisers in developing countries?[151]

## CONCLUSIONS

These accounts and opinions are mostly on the level of impressionistic descriptions. Comparisons seldom involved methodology and often implied a value judgment. The models reflect industrialized societies. Most accounts suggest "culture shock" and individual prejudices about the world. Generalizations are characteristic, and some authors extrapolate limited personal experience in one country or a group of them to the whole Third World. The result is misleading insofar as variations among these countries exist. The premises may be true, but the conclusion is false. It is usual to find that the conclusions may be true, but the premises are false or are taken for granted. A set of conclusions is shown the reader, who must believe them on the basis of the sheer prestige of the printed word or the author's preeminence. Generalizations also extend to the level of a particular country. These would be useful if they provided a theoretical framework for identifying causes and establishing correlations.

Most of the papers which attempt to cover the range of developing countries were written prematurely, in that they fail to consider available studies of particular countries. Comparative studies applying appropriate methods should have made use of these accounts along with personal experiences. The final results should specify the countries in question and present an "understandable pattern" for understanding the library in a world context.[152] For all their concern for libraries in the developing world, most authors have failed to see the general cause-and-effect relationship between underdevelopment and the provision of library services, that socioeconomic tie between developed and developing countries that will inevitably reflect on the library situation in both sides. They have not examined other organizations in developing countries and compared them with libraries. Libraries are just one among many examples of dysfunction of the social structure. The specificity of the process of underdevelopment implies certain norms of institutional operation and human behavior pervading the whole society.

In previous centuries, interesting and reliable accounts were written by foreign naturalists, especially about Africa and the Americas. These travel reports remain valid for their description of contemporary flora and fauna. However, when these naturalists tried to describe and interpret social conditions, they were usually unable to refrain from imposing their cultural patterns. The observer had to put aside his conceptions of right and wrong, good and evil, ugly and beautiful. Only with the advent of modern sociological and anthropological methods of research could the foreign observer make a systematic contribution to the understanding of exotic

cultures. In order to understand an exotic culture, one must assume an indigenous position and perceive that world from within. Unfortunately, many foreign librarians in a developing country cannot avoid behaving like visitors in a zoo of fantastic animals, which are either admirable or disgusting, eventually to be dissected and stuffed to be watched more safely.

In libraries, one additional complication must be considered. Foreign specialists are not always simply describing or interpreting a given reality. They may be trying to change this reality by means of recommendations and suggestions that often are slavish imitations of the models they know; and if the model fails, the context is blamed. Librarians from a developing country might study the distortions and obstacles to library development caused by the importing of foreign models and techniques recommended by visiting experts. And indeed, many foreign consultants and expatriate librarians with experience and familiarity with new techniques and research methods have helped establish library services under enormous difficulties. The foreign expert's opinion often has a greater political impact than that of a local librarian. What is important is the way he describes and interprets his activity there. The external appearance of performing an assigned task is less important than his rationalization of the surrounding conditions that affect provision of library services and the prospects for indigenous librarians to follow.

The confessions of foreign librarians do describe a paradigm of opinions and clichés in the industrialized countries concerning librarianship in developing countries. Furthermore, a challenge is implicit in every criticism from an external observer. There is no homogenous coincidence of opinions in the literature about developing countries, especially in recent works that display a certain concern with the study of causes and a sort of self-criticism of the role played by foreign experts. It is not unusual to read papers questioning the so-called "cultural imperialism" in librarianship and the growing recognition that some librarians from developing countries have made positive contributions to library development in their countries and to the common universal knowledge of librarianship.

Comparative librarianship makes issues less obscure and dissipates prejudices and irrational attitudes. Only through reliable research methods (such as those now being applied in comparative librarianship research) will we be able to counteract impressionistic accounts. The library structure of individual countries must be studied first, by both local and foreign librarians. Library and information services, shaped by and for the industrialized world in the developing countries, may not prove to be viable at all in the framework of the economic and social limitations of

underdevelopment—should library services take priority in countries where most of the population is pressing for other basic needs? The whole question becomes more important in view of the recent trends toward the internationalization of library and information methods and techniques and the growing utilization of advanced technology. Will the developing world be able to reconcile the "barefoot librarian" with the "robot librarian"?

No matter how such questions may be viewed by the foreign observer, it remains the exclusive duty of the community of users in developing countries to determine the services they need. Librarians from the developing world alone can make the best use of their skills and knowledge to come to terms with the users' needs within the limitations, constraints and potentialities of their respective societies.

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